

# **Report to the Governor**

## **Activities and Progress of the Diversity Council**

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**The Honorable Chester J. Culver**

**Governor of Iowa**

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**Submitted by the Diversity Council**

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**June 2009**

**TO:** The Honorable Chester J. Culver

**FROM:** The Diversity Council:

*Chair Preston Daniels, Director, Department of Human Rights  
Co-Chair Renee Hardman, Senior VP-Human Resources, Bankers Trust  
Nancy Berggren, Chief Operating Officer, Department of Administrative  
Services – Human Resources Enterprise (DAS-HRE)  
Shirley Hicks, Teacher, Iowa School for the Deaf, Retired  
Reginald Jackson, Senior Counsel, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.  
Robin Jenkins, Recruitment Coordinator, DAS-HRE  
Jim Larew, General Counsel and Policy Director, Governor's Office  
Miguel Moreno, Highway Technician, Department of Transportation  
Alba Perez, Diversity Development Director, Greater Des Moines Partnership  
Ralph Rosenberg, Director, Civil Rights Commission  
Jonathan Thorup, Fire Prevention Inspector, Department of Public Safety  
Miriam Tyson, Special Projects Manager, Department of Economic Development  
Dinh VanLo, Executive Director, Tai Village  
Ray Walton, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Stephen Wooderson, Director, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services*

**DATE:** June 30, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Report to the Governor on the Activities and Progress of the Diversity Council

## **I. Introduction**

Executive Order Four affirms the Culver/Judge Administration's commitment to diversity by establishing a Diversity Council, made up of individuals with expertise in diversity. One of the Council's charges is to submit a written report, outlining its activities and progress, to the Governor's Office no later than June 30 of each year. This report will outline the activities of the Council from July 1, 2008, to the present.

## **II. Meeting Dates and Subcommittees**

A. The Diversity Council has met on the following dates:

1. July 10, 2008
2. August 14, 2008
3. September 18, 2008
4. October 16, 2008
5. November 20, 2008
6. January 8, 2009
7. February 12, 2009
8. March 12, 2009
9. April 9, 2009
10. May 14, 2009
11. June 11, 2009

B. The Diversity Council created two new subcommittees during the past fiscal year:

1. Persons with Disabilities – formed on July 10, 2008, to determine ways to increase employment of persons with disabilities. Members include:
  - a. Nancy Berggren
  - b. Preston Daniels
  - c. Miguel Moreno
  - d. Stephen Wooderson
2. Public Forum Subcommittee – formed on August 14, 2008, to determine a mechanism for the Council to have a dialog with state employees and citizens of Iowa. Members include:
  - a. Reginald Jackson
  - b. Miriam Tyson
  - c. Volunteers from the community

C. The Diversity Council continued its work in the six subcommittees formed during Fiscal Year 2008:

1. Best Practices
  - a. Renee Hardman
  - b. Alba Perez
  - c. Walter Reed
  - d. Miriam Tyson
2. State's Hiring Policies and Practices
  - a. Nancy Berggren
  - b. Reginald Jackson
  - c. Miguel Moreno
  - d. Walter Reed
  - e. Miriam Tyson
  - f. Dinh VanLo
3. Diversity Training for Entire State Workforce
  - a. Jonathan Thorup
  - b. Miriam Tyson
  - c. Dinh VanLo
  - d. Stephen Wooderson
4. Referral System
  - a. Shirley Hicks
  - b. Robin Jenkins
  - c. Stephen Wooderson
5. Report to the Governor
  - a. Preston Daniels
  - b. Miriam Tyson

6. Diversity Plans

- a. Preston Daniels
- b. Renee Hardman
- c. Robin Jenkins
- d. Alba Perez
- e. Ralph Rosenberg

**III. Key Charges (as Outlined in Executive Order Four) with Activities and Progress from July 1, 2008, to the Present**

*A. Engage with private businesses and other governmental entities to recommend and actively promote best practices for optimizing diversity throughout state government.*

The Best Practices Subcommittee organized two best practices presentations: one on August 14, 2008, by Renee Hardman, Senior Vice-President – Human Resources of Bankers Trust, and one on October 16, 2009, by Jacquie Easley, Director of Diversity Services at Mercy Medical Center. Renee Hardman stressed that the President and CEO of Bankers Trust believes that commitment to diversity starts at the top and works down throughout the organization. With this in mind, he developed many strategies to increase diversity at Bankers Trust. The Council discussed the possibility of implementing three of these strategies in state government:

- Require directors and division administrators to attend a certain number of diverse events each year, such as an NAACP banquet or a Hispanic festival.
- Place the requirement of “increasing diversity in your agency” as a performance standard for all directors.
- Require hiring managers to state in writing why the minority candidate was not hired for each underutilized class. (See recommendations.)

Just as the CEO at Bankers Trust believed that the commitment to diversity must start with him, Jacquie Easley stated that the CEO of Mercy Medical Center set the tone for diversity at Mercy. The Mercy CEO created a strong mission statement, describing the hospital’s values and diversity goals. He also created two diversity councils: one for executive leadership to set the tone and one for employees to plan a diversity awareness event each month. The Council discussed:

- Having a diversity mission statement for state government, possibly originating from the Governor’s Office.
- Creating a diversity council made up of state employees – or perhaps one diversity council for each state agency.

*B. Review the State’s policies, procedures and practices related to the hiring of a diverse workforce and recommend methods to ensure these are implemented and followed throughout state government. The Council shall include information in the annual report....*

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) established a series of questions for each department to answer regarding its hiring practices. Those materials were submitted to DAS in February of 2008. After reviewing the materials, DAS staff had several questions regarding the answers provided by departments; therefore, DAS decided to interview each department about its hiring practices. When completed, DAS will meet with the Hiring Practices Subcommittee, which will report the findings to the Council and work to determine next steps.

- C. *Develop a plan, including suggestions and a timeline for implementation and estimated costs, for training all state employees with respect to diversity.*

The Council implemented diversity training, divided into two levels, for all employees in the Executive Branch of state government. The Council's Diversity Training Subcommittee reviewed the proposals of eight firms, each submitting a competitive bid during the RFP process, and chose Rizzo and Associates to conduct the first section of the training for managers and supervisors. Rizzo and Associates facilitated eight-hour training seminars for approximately 2,000 managers and supervisors. This training, which was provided at no cost to departments, began on June 23, 2008, and continued through December 2009. The Department of Administrative Services – Human Resources Enterprise (DAS-HRE) absorbed the cost of this training in its budget in the amount of \$165,000.

The second level of diversity training for all state employees – management and staff – began on March 9, 2009, and will continue through the end of the year. The Diversity Training Subcommittee and DAS hired nine trainers as temporary state employees to conduct diversity training courses for the entire state workforce, including managers and supervisors, at a cost to departments of \$9.85 per employee. Five internal DAS-HRE employees were also chosen to conduct training courses. Rizzo and Associates held train-the-trainer sessions on February 27 and March 3. Sessions began on March 9 for DAS employees and Diversity Council members, who provided feedback and comments on the training. The following week, diversity training was rolled out to all state agencies. By the end of the year, 750 individual 3.5-hour sessions will be completed.

The intent of the training is to build the business case, based on everything we know today and predict for tomorrow, that Iowa – and specifically state government – must realize the value of creating a diverse workforce and foster an inclusive environment. The design of the program is purposeful. The introductory exercises are important to build trust and rapport within the group. As an interactive, engaging learning experience, the program leads participants to understand a shared language, subconscious and learned biases, and real-life application case studies. Participants leave the training course with tools to help them address stereotypes in the workplace. The Council believes that real learning takes place when people connect with each other and understand why valuing diversity has a personal impact.

The Council also identified areas for on-going diversity training for state employees. First, a *Diversity Resource Guide*, with activities for managers, was distributed to every attendee of the managers and supervisors training. Second, DAS will be offering more diversity courses to compliment the four currently offered. Lastly, the DAS customer newsletter will continue to include a "Diversity Corner" section.

- D. *Develop a state-government referral system, whereby candidates who interview with one agency and are not hired, but may be a good candidate for another agency, are referred to that agency for consideration. The system should be in place no later than December 1, 2008.*

The Referral System Subcommittee proposed to the entire Council that recruitment coordinators at the agency level recommend applicants to DAS, which would then use the BrassRing applicant tracking system to manage the list within DAS. After input from the Council, DAS implemented this program on June 24, 2009.

- E. *Submit a written report outlining its activities and progress to the Governor's Office no later than June 30 of each year.*

This document constitutes fulfillment of this charge.

- F. Executive Order Four stipulates that all Executive Branch agencies will *submit a Diversity Plan to the Diversity Council...annually no later than July 31, with the initial plan due on July 31, 2008. These plans shall be used by DAS to develop the State's Affirmative Action Plan and Report, as required by Iowa Code section 19B.5(2).*

Each Executive Branch department submitted a Diversity Plan to DAS by July 31, 2008. The Diversity Plan from each department was then used by DAS to write the State's annual Affirmative Action Plan and Report (Chapter 19B of the Code of Iowa requires that an annual state Affirmative Action Plan be completed by September 30 of each year). Again this year, departments will be submitting their Diversity Plans to DAS by July 31 and DAS will use them to write the 2009 Affirmative Action Plan and Report by September 30.

The Diversity Plans Subcommittee, along with a group of diversity-minded individuals selected from the community, reviewed the 2008 Diversity Plans. The Subcommittee wanted to learn what departments were doing with diversity and recruitment in order to get a baseline and some direction on how to proceed. Having reviewed all of the agency submissions, the Subcommittee is now compiling a list of best practices and formulating recommendations.

- G. Executive Order Four stipulates that all Executive Branch agencies will *work with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to determine ways to increase employment of persons with disabilities.*

On July 10, 2008, the Council formed the Persons with Disabilities Subcommittee to address this issue. The Subcommittee, which is using the work of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) as a foundation upon which to build, also hopes to work with the Department for the Blind. Currently, IVRS is working with DAS on referrals of qualified candidates and retention of state employees with disabilities.

IVRS is also customizing training opportunities and internships for persons with disabilities. IVRS and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have partnered to employ lowans with disabilities. The benefits are threefold: trainees at DNR may learn job skills to help them attain employment; DNR may develop a potential pool of qualified applicants; and IVRS counselors may assess the trainees' job performance.

Moving forward, the Subcommittee would like to work with DAS to create training courses and resources to specifically address hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. The Subcommittee is also working with IVRS on a survey, which will be anonymous and voluntary, to determine how many persons with disabilities are currently working in state government.

#### **IV. Other Activities of the Diversity Council**

- A. The Council oversees a website, located at [http://das.hre.iowa.gov/hre\\_diversity\\_council.html](http://das.hre.iowa.gov/hre_diversity_council.html), for the public to view:
  - 1. Biographical information on Council Members
  - 2. Meeting Dates
  - 3. Agendas
  - 4. Minutes
  - 5. Meeting Materials
  - 6. Activities and Progress
  - 7. Diversity Plans
  - 8. Affirmative Action Reports
  - 9. Diversity-Related Current Events
- B. The Council addresses public concerns during the “Public Comment” portion of each meeting (see addendum).
- C. The Council is planning a public forum to inform the general public and state employees about Executive Order Four and the Diversity Council’s goals, accomplishments and current projects.

#### **V. Recommendations**

- A. Hiring processes across state government must be standardized for greater efficiency; therefore, the recruitment and selection process must be consistent with the DAS “Applicant Screening Manual.”
- B. Departments should strive to have a hiring pool of applicants of diverse background, i.e. disability, ethnicity, gender, and age. Justification must be made to the Director when a qualified candidate in an underutilized category is not hired.
- C. DAS must ensure next year’s Diversity Plans are specific in identifying methods that departments will use in expanding, when applicable, the diversity of their workforce.
- D. Department Directors’ performance evaluations should include a diversity component, which would reflect specific achievements in the areas of diversity recruitment, hiring, training, and retention.
- E. The Governor should commission DAS to review, evaluate, and make necessary changes to the current Affirmative Action Process within state government; including, refining the data used in the Affirmative Action Report.

- F. The Governor should consider hiring a Diversity Inclusion Officer – whose job description would be developed by DAS – or expand the role of the Affirmative Action Officer to include diversity initiatives.
- G. The Governor should lead by example to build a strong statewide commitment to diversity and strengthen diversity efforts in all three branches of government. In so doing, the Governor should consider inviting a person from the Regents, the Judicial Branch, and the Legislative Branch to join the Diversity Council.
- H. Diversity training should be mandatory for employees in all three branches of government.
- I. DAS must provide a plan for ongoing training and methods for leadership, recruitment, and hiring to use in integrating diversity into their workplace; specifically:
  - 1. Provide a core of orientation courses for new managers.
  - 2. Provide follow-up training/reviews for new managers.
- J. DAS should establish a training curriculum directed toward improving interview skills for current state employees, who are seeking professional development, promotions, or new positions within the State.
- K. DAS should establish a training curriculum for hiring managers on how to be mindful of cultural differences when conducting interviews.



## **ADDENDUM**

### **SUGGESTIONS FROM PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION OF DIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETINGS JULY 10, 2008 – APRIL 9, 2009**

1. Employees should be allowed to attend Diversity Council meetings on state time.  
(Currently, state employees who are not directly involved with the Diversity Council must use vacation time to attend the meetings.)
2. Currently, performance evaluations are “top-down,” meaning supervisors evaluate staff; staff should have the opportunity to evaluate supervisors.
3. Retention is not a good indicator of progress, because the State can have a “bad” employee for many years.
4. The State should institute a formal, standardized internship/mentoring program.
5. In matters of racial diversity, it matters *where* employees work; are people of color in important decision-making roles?
6. The State needs to focus on how it responds to gender issues.
7. Due to a potential state hiring freeze, the Council should focus on retention.
8. The Council should devise a way to add interns to the Referral System.
9. The Governor should meet with Directors personally to discuss diversity goals.
10. The Council should examine “at-will” positions, as they lend themselves to discrimination.